



Great Expectations:

*Boomers and the
Future of Volunteering*

VolunteerMatch User Research Study



Presented by: **MetLife Foundation**

Acknowledgements

VolunteerMatch wishes to thank the following organizations for their support in preparing this report. While their encouragement and involvement has been invaluable, any errors, omissions or opinions included in the report are solely the responsibility of VolunteerMatch.

MetLife Foundation MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its long-standing tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation has been involved in a variety of aging-related initiatives addressing issues of civic involvement, intergenerational activities, caregiving, mental fitness and health and wellness. For more information about MetLife Foundation, visit www.metlife.org.

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Through our Ageing Programme, we seek to bring about lasting change in the lives of older adults, with a special emphasis on those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable because of ageism, poverty or poor health. We aim to help transform how ageing is viewed within society and improve the way older persons are treated by society. We focus on ageing in Bermuda, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and the United States.

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The Corporation for National and Community Service improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. Each year, the Corporation provides opportunities for more than 2 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America.


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The Bridgespan Group is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization applying leading-edge management strategies, tools and talent to help other nonprofits and foundations achieve greater social impact.

HART RESEARCH Peter D. Hart Research Associates is strategic research, not just polling or market research. Our clients turn to us – and return to us – because our work is both highly creative and designed to uncover the information that leads to sound decision-making, whether it's a campaign, a communications plan, or a corporate logo.



Fenton Communications is the largest public interest communications firm in the country. Since 1982, Fenton has contributed to some of the most defining social change movements of the past quarter century, from the fall of apartheid to the rise of MoveOn.org as a grassroots political force.

About VolunteerMatch

VolunteerMatch's mission is to help everyone find a great place to volunteer by making it easier for good people and good causes to connect. Its popular online service supports a social network of over a million civic-minded users including the employees, customers and members of some of America's most recognized businesses and institutions. The service is the preferred volunteer recruiting network for tens of thousands of nonprofits nationwide and is the top search result for "volunteer" on both Google and Yahoo!.

In 2006, the VolunteerMatch network delivered over 75,000,000 pages of information on service and volunteering; welcomed 4.8 million visitors and supported 44,521 registered nonprofits serving local communities across the country.

VolunteerMatch is the recipient of Webby Awards for "Activism" and "Services," and has been recognized for its accomplishments by The White House, M.I.T, and the Smithsonian Institution.



Foreword by John Gomperts

President, Civic Ventures

CEO, Experience Corps



The aging of America is likely to be the biggest demographic story of our times. Though the statistics about the changes in the make-up of the American population have become familiar, they are nonetheless breathtaking. The largest generation ever to pass through its 40s and 50s is now moving into its 60s. In five years, 20 percent of the population will be over 60. This will bring profound changes to schools and universities, to health care and housing, to the workplace and civil society, to virtually every institution in our lives.

In 2005, the MetLife Foundation/Civic Ventures "New Face of Work" Survey found that boomers have a strong desire to launch a new chapter in their working lives that involves significant social contribution. People over 50, especially adults between 50 and 55, showed a surprisingly high level of interest in making shifts from their intense midlife careers to new pursuits that improve lives in their communities.

The boomer generation is known for wanting choice. And every study to date has found that boomers are not looking for busy work. They are looking for meaning and purpose. They are looking for interesting and challenging opportunities to make an impact on big societal problems, from education to the environment, hunger to homelessness to health care.

As the President of Civic Ventures, the CEO of Experience Corps, and a VolunteerMatch Board Member, I am particularly encouraged by the findings in "Great Expectations: Boomers and the Future of Volunteering." This study underscores the opportunity for nonprofits to engage the time and talent of this exceptional generation and the promise of the Internet as a tool to recruit them.

With knowledge and investment we can transform the aging of the baby boom generation from a potential crisis into an historic opportunity. There are millions of talented, experienced Americans ready to roll up their sleeves. All they need now is a great opportunity.

I. Introduction

Boomer Volunteers: A Reservoir of Talent and Experience

Much has been written about the extraordinary opportunity represented by the coming wave of 77 million Baby Boomers reaching retirement age, and how this wave could reshape the landscape of civil society. According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, volunteering overall in America is near a 30-year high. In 2006, 61.2 million people volunteered, investing an estimated \$152 billion of labor into the social sector. The boomers are an important part of this shift: their interest and



(of) the volunteers we have now, a lot of them are volunteering for two other volunteer programs at the same time. Or some of them are just newly retired, and they're still trying to adjust to retirement. Some of them are going back and getting second jobs because maybe they just can't handle being retired.

attention to making a difference has increased mid-life volunteering (ages 45-64) nearly 30% since 1974.¹

These shifts are fueled, in large part, by the growing demand for volunteers. From 1996 to 2004 the number of nonprofit organizations in the US grew 28.8% from just over a million to 1.4 million.² Today, the nonprofit sector is a \$1.3 trillion dollar segment of the US economy. A 2004 Urban Institute study found that 81% of America's public charities engage volunteers, and despite the historically high rates of volunteering, 67% still report some degree of difficulty recruiting the volunteers they need.³

¹ Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development. *Volunteering in America: 2007 State Trends and Rankings in Civic Life*, Washington, DC, 2007

² National Center for Charitable Statistics, IRS Master Business File, 12/2004

³ Urban Institute. *Volunteer Management Capacity in America's Charities and Congregations: A Briefing Report*. Washington, DC, 2004

I think, to some extent, the older volunteers just have a better wealth of background information to draw on.

To what extent these trends will converge or collapse as the boomers venture into their "retirement" years is still unclear. What is clear, however, is that change is coming. This report, sponsored by The Atlantic Philanthropies and presented with the generous support of the MetLife Foundation, seeks to better understand this unfolding opportunity so that more civic-minded organizations and causes can position themselves to tap into the time and talent of this remarkable generation in the decades ahead.

A Closer Look at Giving Back

To get a closer look at the first wave of boomers who are just now entering their 60's and their views on volunteering, VolunteerMatch commissioned Peter D. Hart Research Associates to conduct a comparative analysis of the attitudes and experiences of individuals of all ages sampled from VolunteerMatch's active user base. This research explores both the nonprofit and the volunteer perspective, but focuses on identifying the evolving motivations, attitudes, skills and expectations of volunteers as they mature. The findings are intended to provide useful and

actionable data for those organizations and institutions interested in expanding their capacity to effectively recruit and engage the talent and experience of older volunteers.

The extensive user research study was complemented by a national phone survey of "55+ non-volunteers" and one-on-one follow-up interviews with participating nonprofit organi-



zations. The full study also uncovered some interesting comparisons between volunteers and non-volunteers and gives voice to the generally favorable opinion nonprofits have of their current 55+ volunteers.

The full study also underscores the growing use of the Internet among older Americans and illustrates its usefulness as a tool for connecting volunteers with local nonprofit organizations. The data suggest a favorable climate for the

continued development of social information networks to facilitate more satisfying volunteer relationships and encourage greater levels of civic engagement.

Challenges and Opportunities in Engaging Older Volunteers

While the findings are encouraging, there is a great deal of work to be done. As expected, older users are having a more difficult time finding volunteer opportunities that interest them. Compared to the general population, they are noticeably more interested in making use of their existing skills and interests, and those 55+ were nearly twice as likely (42%) as the general population of users (24%) to pass on an opportunity that they failed to find "interesting and challenging."



The findings echo the working hypothesis of other researchers and practitioners in the field that older volunteers, with their desire to apply a lifetime of experience and skill, have expectations for their volunteer commitments that don't currently align with the perceived need for skilled volunteers among nonprofits. VolunteerMatch believes that knowledge and education, coupled with a more effective communi-

...the consistency of those (older) volunteers makes them oftentimes more successful than the younger volunteers.

cation infrastructure, can realign these dynamics by reinforcing high expectations and empowering more organizations to make the most of their volunteer initiatives.

Leveraging the Internet

VolunteerMatch is committed to building world-class Internet services to help make it easier for good people and good causes to connect. With the ongoing support of The Atlantic Philanthropies, VolunteerMatch is responding to these findings by launching a strategic three-year initiative to expand and enhance the VolunteerMatch network to encourage the virtuous cycle of civic engagement among older adults. The program will invest in operational



improvements to make it easier for our non-profit members to tap into the time and talent of the increasingly rich pool of older volunteers. The goals of the program are to:

- *Expand the community of nonprofit organizations actively engaging the time and talent of older adults*
- *Expand the number, quality, visibility, diversity and range of opportunities for older adults to serve the public good*
- *Increase the number of older adults able to find a meaningful opportunity to serve the public good*

We see tremendous vitality and innovation in civil society today. Major business schools are teaching social entrepreneurship and nonprofit strategies, corporations are rethinking philanthropy and its connection to their reputation and success, and the nonprofit sector is continuing to expand with new people and talent. As more and more organizations are reminded of the strength and talent of volunteers and the significance of the opportunity emerging over the next two decades, we expect that the best and brightest will find the resources and leadership to invite boomers to join them in reinventing the world we live in.

(the key to recruiting older volunteers is) broadening the Internet's way of recruiting potential senior volunteers.

II. Methodology

Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., conducted a five-part study on behalf of VolunteerMatch from April to August, 2006. Each research component is described in detail below. This following report details findings from the research.

Literature and Data Review: Quantitative and qualitative assessments of two recent national surveys, both produced in partnership with The Corporation for National & Community Service: 1) The Volunteer Supplement to the 2003 Current Population Survey (CPS), conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which examines volunteer behavior as well as reasons why people decide not to volunteer; and 2) The 2004 Urban Institute's *Volunteer Management Capacity in America's Charities and Congregations: A Briefing Report*, a survey of more than 3,000 nonprofits on issues such as how they used volunteers, their volunteer management infrastructure, and their recruitment challenges. Reviewing these surveys helped guide the remaining project elements, especially our development of subsequent questionnaires.

Survey of Older Non-Volunteers: Telephone survey among 507 55- to 75-year-olds who are not currently volunteering. Approximately two

hundred and fifty interviews each were conducted among 55- to 65-year-old and 66- to 75-year-old non-volunteers. These two samples were then weighted to their proper proportions within the older adult population. Interviews were conducted June 12 to 16, 2006. The overall margin of error is ± 4.4 percentage points and is larger among subgroups.



Survey of VolunteerMatch Volunteer Users:

On-line survey among 2,316 volunteers who are registered with VolunteerMatch, conducted June 12 to July 6, 2006. The overall margin of error is ± 2.0 percentage points and is larger among subgroups. Sampled from a registered volunteer user base of 621,025 as of June 2006.

I think that they kind of need to understand what type of volunteer opportunities senior citizens are looking for because, from my experience, it's not like a one-time-only event. You know what I mean? It's like they're looking for something ongoing and consistent, something where they can feel like they're really needed and that they're a part of something, for lack of a better word. It's like it's also social. It becomes their, you know, their social, their work, everything, community. They (older volunteers) are looking for community.

Survey Staff Of VolunteerMatch Nonprofit

Users: On-line survey among 1,024 staff of nonprofit organizations that use VolunteerMatch, conducted June 9 to 27, 2006. The overall margin of error is ± 3.1 percentage points and is larger among subgroups. Sampled from a registered nonprofit user base of 41,016 as of June 2006.

In-Depth User Interviews: Twenty in-depth telephone interviews with volunteer coordinators at nonprofits that use VolunteerMatch. Ten interviews were conducted among coordinators at nonprofits using volunteers age 55 and over and 10 interviews were conducted among coordinators at nonprofits that do not use volunteers in that age group. The interviews were conducted from August 7 to 16, 2006.



III. Key Findings

Prospects for Growing the Pool of Older Volunteers

(55+, non-volunteer research)

Many older non-volunteers are reconsidering volunteering

- Retirement is viewed by most as a time to begin a new chapter
- More than half of 55+ non-volunteers report some interest in volunteering. Professionals and women aged 55-64 are the most likely to be interested

Many older non-volunteers aren't volunteering because they haven't found the right opportunity

- Among the non-volunteers 55+ most interested in volunteering, two in five report they



I think it is an untapped resource, that there are retired people who could and would like to volunteer. It's just really getting at them, so to speak.

don't volunteer because they haven't found the right opportunity

- Older non-volunteers are particularly interested in learning new skills and exploring new interests
- 32% of non-volunteers 55+ would prefer a volunteer activity that helps them learn new skills or explore new interests

What makes older volunteers different? (User research - volunteers)

Among active volunteers, older adult volunteers are more likely to appreciate the personal significance of volunteering

- Users age 55+ are contributing nearly 100 hours a year more than users aged 30-39 (226 hours vs. 132 hours)
- 75% of users 55+ view volunteering as "very important" or "one of the most important" things in their life

Volunteers across all age groups are motivated by a desire to help others and make a difference

- 46% of respondents report that they volunteer to help others/feel like they have made a difference

“(They) have great people skills. Their small business backgrounds, I thought, at some level it’s more entrepreneurial, it’s more I’m going to take charge of the situation.”

Volunteers grow increasingly interested in making use of their career and non-career related skills as they mature

- A majority of users 55+ agree that they would prefer a volunteer opportunity that makes use of their personal or professional skills

Men 55+ are particularly interested in making use of their skills

- Nearly two-thirds of male users 55+ indicate that they would prefer a volunteer opportunity that makes use of their personal or professional skills

Volunteers 55+ are more than twice as likely as those under 55 to pass on an opportunity they don't find "interesting and challenging"

- Two in five users 55+ report that they are "much less likely" to volunteer for an oppor-

tunity that they don't find "interesting and challenging" compared to one in five among those under 55.

Volunteers 55+ expect they will be volunteering more over the next few years

- 53% of users 55+ expect they will be volunteering more than they are now over the next few years
- Only 9% report that they expect they will be volunteering less than they are now

The Nonprofit Perspective

(User research - nonprofits)

Nonprofits appreciate the value of their volunteers

- Nonprofits recognize that, among other benefits, volunteers allow them to: provide services they otherwise could not; increase the quality of their programs; and pay more detailed attention to the people they serve

Most nonprofits are already engaging older volunteers

- Nonprofits report a need for volunteers across all age groups
- 81% of nonprofits surveyed report working with volunteers between the ages of 55-64 and 62% are working with volunteers between the ages of 65-74



Nonprofits still report difficulty finding the volunteers they need

- 53% report that finding volunteers/known where to look for volunteers has made it difficult to engage the volunteers they need
- 51% believe that it is difficult to find volunteers because people are too busy
- 46% report difficulty finding people interested in volunteering

Nonprofits use volunteers for many skilled activities, but the full range of volunteer skills remains underutilized

- The professional skills of older volunteers are underutilized across a wide variety of functions

Use of the Internet

(User research – volunteer & nonprofits)

The Internet is making it easier for people of all ages to find nonprofit organizations that need help

- 66% of those surveyed report that their use of the Internet has made it easier for them to find an organization that needed help
- 61% report that it has made it easier to find interesting opportunities

The Internet is empowering nonprofits to strengthen and expand their volunteer initiatives

- 84% of nonprofit users agree their use of the Internet helps them reach out and recruit more volunteers
- 82% report that it makes it easier to find the right volunteers

The Internet is already successfully connecting older adults with satisfying volunteer experiences

- 82% of users 55+ who had recently volunteered were satisfied with the quality of their volunteer experience

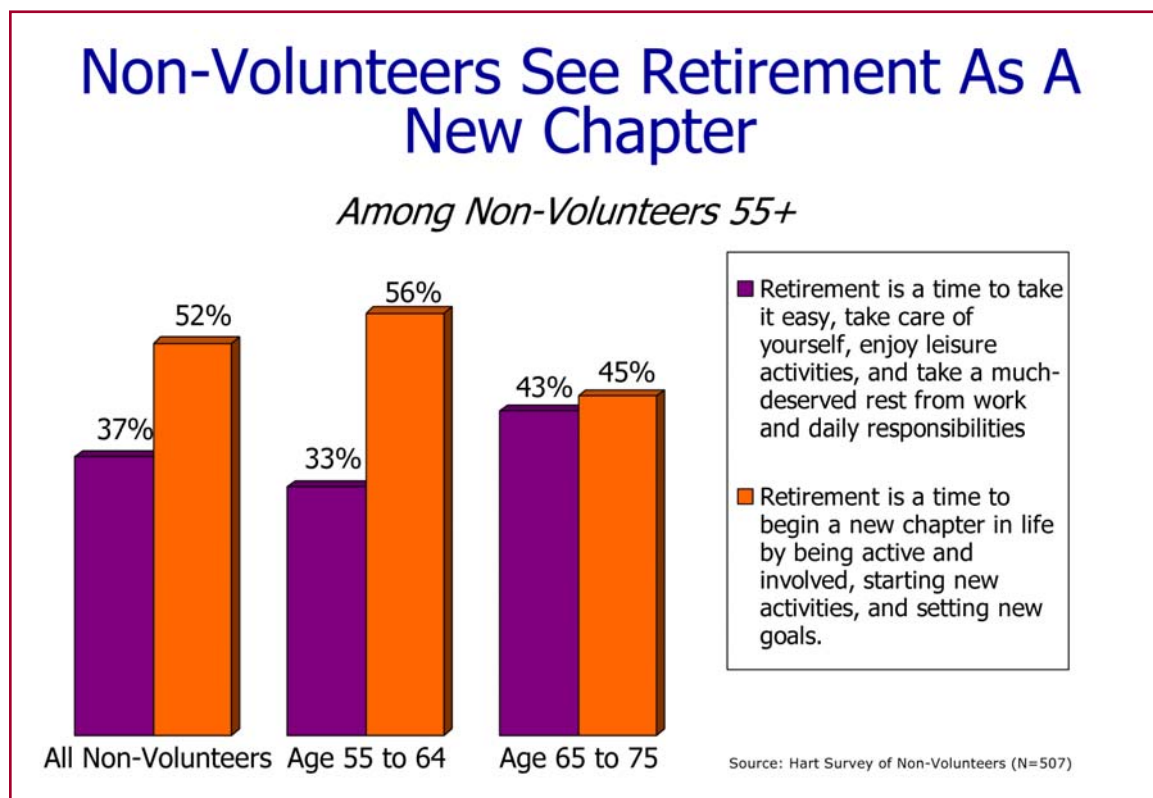
IV. Findings

1. Prospects for growing the pool of older volunteers *(55+, non-volunteer research)*

The national phone survey of individuals aged 55 – 75, not currently volunteering, explored the attitudes and opinions of "non-volunteers" in order to identify the populations with the greatest interest in volunteering and the types of opportunities most likely to appeal to them.

Older Non-volunteers see retirement as a new chapter

Older Americans age 55+ are approaching retirement with an upbeat attitude, with the majority (52%) saying that this stage of their lives is a time to begin a new chapter in life by being active and involved, compared with 37% who say it is time to take it easy.



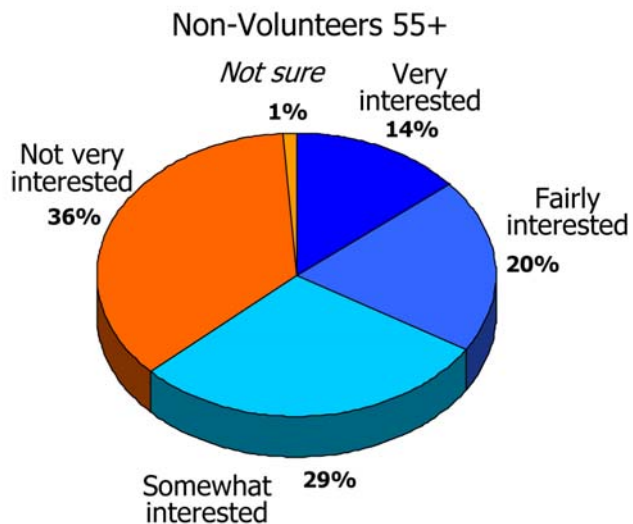
Significant interest in volunteering among older non-volunteers

More than half of all older adults 55+ who have not volunteered in the past year indicate some interest in doing so now or at some point in the future; 34% are either "very" or "fairly" interested. Of those who say they are "very" or "fairly" interested in volunteering:

- 45% are college graduates
- 42% are professionals/managers
- 41% are women age 55-64
- 39% are churchgoers

More than Half of Non-Volunteers 55+ Have Some Interest in Volunteering

How interested are you in volunteering, either now or at some point in the future?



Very/fairly interested

College graduates	45%
Professionals/managers	42%
Women age 55-64	41%
Churchgoers	39%

Just 11% of non-volunteers say they have tried to find a volunteer opportunity in the past year.

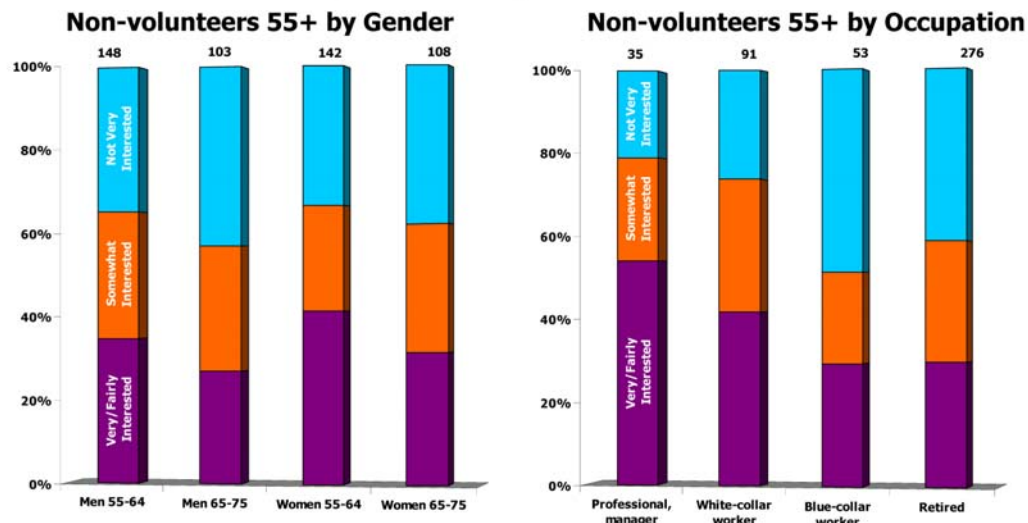
Source: Hart Survey of Non-Volunteers (N=507)

Older professionals and women aged 55-64 show most interest

Among non-volunteers 55+, women are somewhat more likely to be interested in volunteering than men, while interest in volunteering is highest for both men and women in their late 50's and early 60's. When viewed by occupation, professionals are the most likely to say they are interested in volunteering.

Among Non-Volunteers, Professionals and Women Aged 55-64 Show Most Interest

How interested are you in volunteering, either now, or at some point in the future?



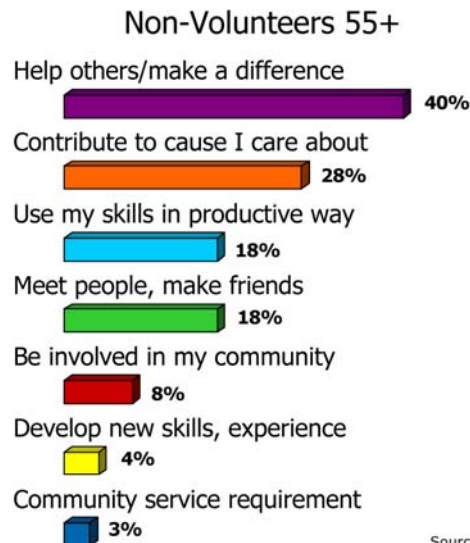
Source: Hart Survey of Non-Volunteers (N=507)

"Helping Others/Making a Difference" is top reason for volunteering

Volunteering is about making emotional connections with people and issues we care about. Among older non-volunteers, 40% say that helping others and making a difference is the most important reason to volunteer and 28% want to contribute to a cause they care about.

"Helping Others/Making A Difference" Is Top Reason for Volunteering

Selected Most Important Reason for Volunteering



Source: Hart Survey of Non-Volunteers (N=507)

Important factors in a positive volunteer experience

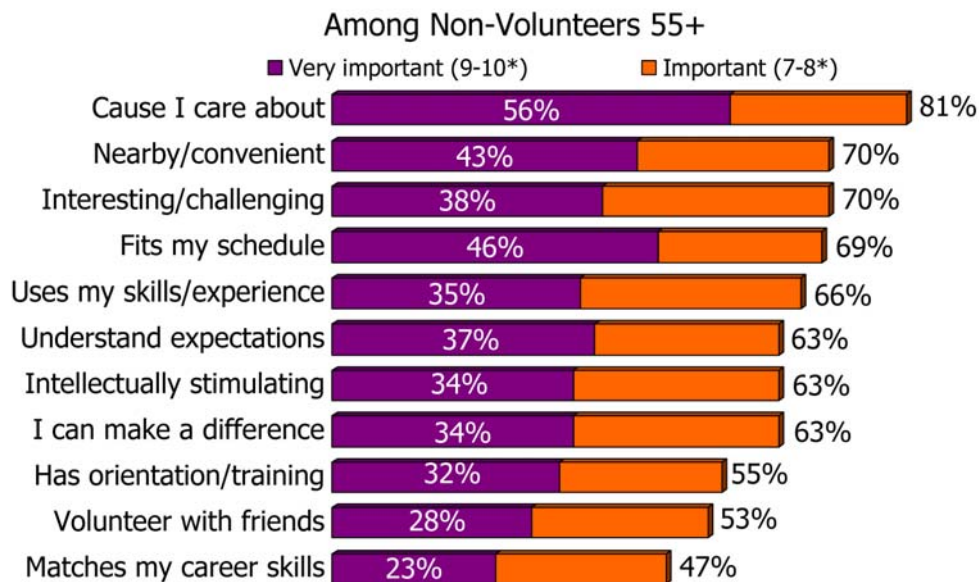
An overwhelming majority of older non-volunteers report that they believe the most important factor in a positive volunteer experience is to be working on a cause that they care about (81%).

However, it is important to note, that while people are drawn by their emotions to volunteer, they are very aware of the practical and logistical issues associated with volunteering. Important factors contributing to a positive volunteer experience include:

- Cause I care about (81%)
- Nearby/convenient (71%)
- Interesting and challenging (70%)
- Fits my schedule (69%)

What Are Non-Volunteers Looking For?

Factors that might contribute to a positive volunteer experience



*Ratings on ten-point scale: 10 = essential factor, 1 = not at all important factor

Source: Hart Survey of Non-Volunteers (N=507)

Developing new skills and new interests are important to non-volunteers

Non-volunteers 55+ show a particular interest in volunteer activities that help them learn new skills or explore new interests:

- 32% prefer to learn a new skill or explore a new interest
- 26% prefer an activity that can be done by most people regardless of experience/interest
- 21% prefer an activity that draws on their career-related skills
- 16% prefer an activity that uses non-career-related skills and interests

Non-Volunteers 55+ Report Being Most Interested in Learning New Skills and Exploring New Interests

Type of Volunteer Activity I Would Most Prefer

Non-Volunteers 55+

Activity that helps me learn new skills or explore new interests



Activity that most people can do, regardless of experience/interest



Activity that makes use of my job/career-related skills



Activity that makes use of my non-career related skills, talents, interests



Source: Hart Survey of Non-Volunteers (N=507)

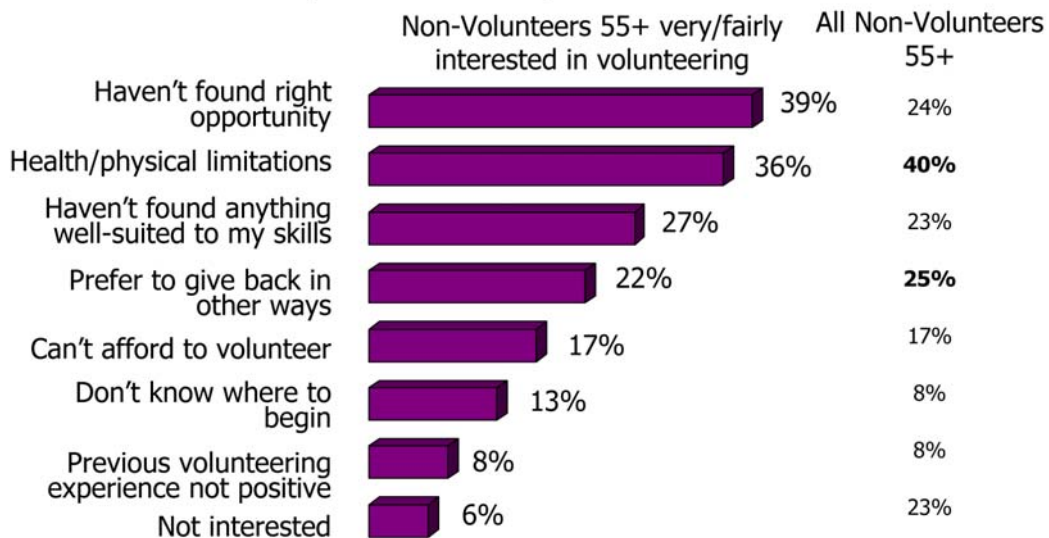
Barriers to volunteering

While time and health are real barriers for older non-volunteers, many simply haven't found the opportunity they are looking for. Among those most interested in volunteering:

- 39% report that they have not found the right opportunity
- 27% report that they have not found anything well-suited to their skills

Barriers To Volunteering

Besides not enough time, which of these is the most/ second-most important reason you don't volunteer?



Source: Hart Survey of Non-Volunteers (N=507)

2. Are Older Volunteers Different? *(User research - volunteers)*

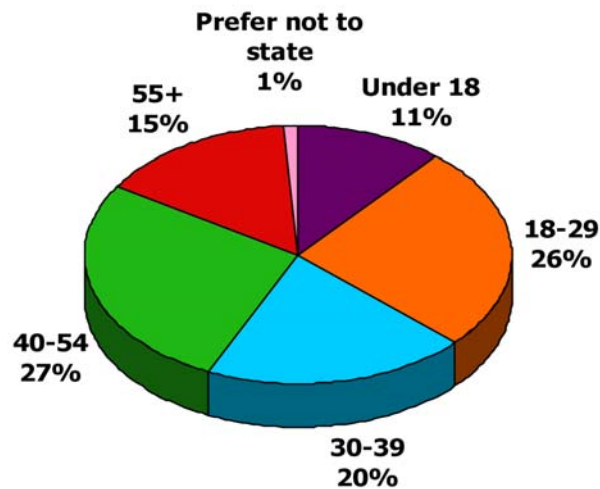
To better understand the interests and expectations that shape volunteer behavior across different age groups, VolunteerMatch sampled its active user base to take a closer look. The sample included volunteers of all ages, but has been framed to provide useful and actionable data to those interested in engaging the talent and experience of older volunteers.

An overview of the sample population:

- 27% are age 40-54
- 26% are age 18-29
- 20% are 30-39
- 15% are age 55 or older
- 11% are under age 18

Volunteering Attracts People of All ages

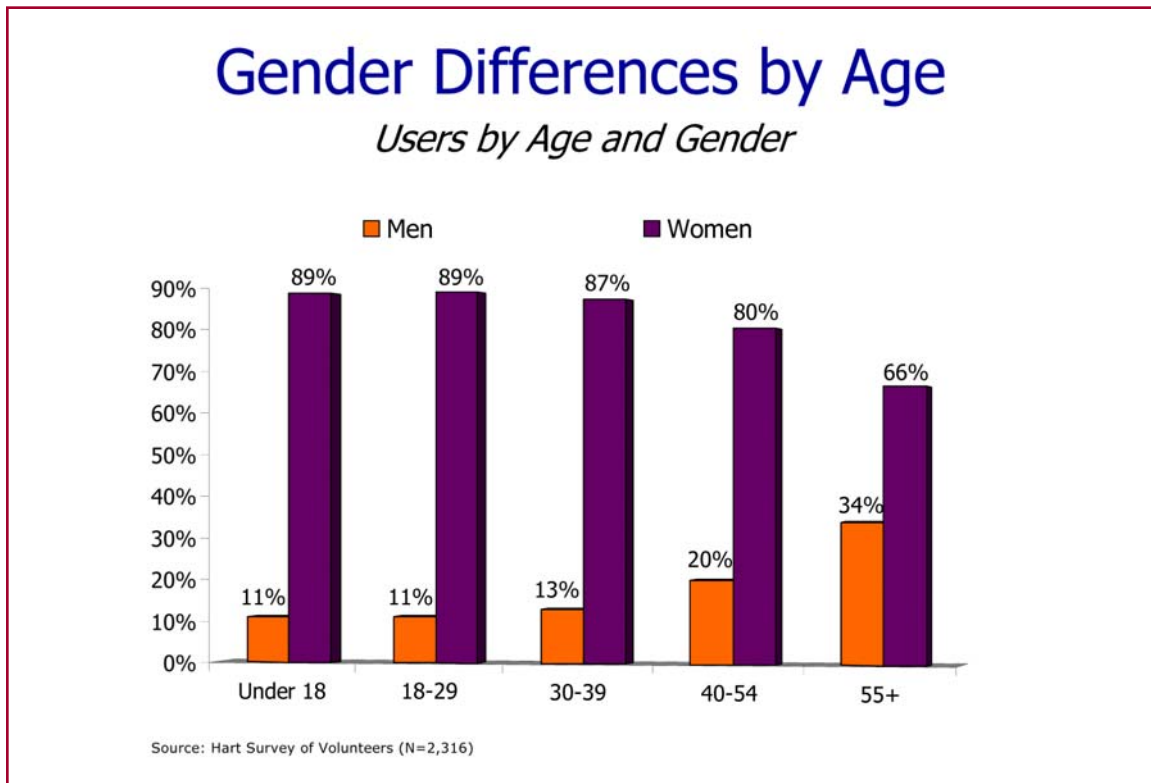
All Users by Age



Source: Hart Survey of Volunteers (N=2,316)

Gender differences by age

Interestingly, VolunteerMatch attracts far more women than men across all age groups, with the proportion of men to women increasing with age.



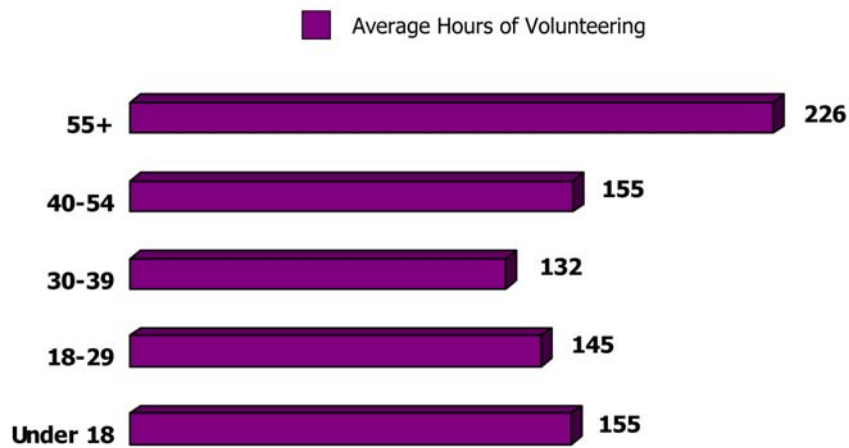
Older volunteers volunteer more

Users age 55+ are contributing almost 100 hours a year more than users aged 30-39 and volunteered more hours per year than any other age group.

- Adults 55+ volunteer 226 hours a year
- Adults 40-54 volunteer 155 hours a year
- Adults 30-39 volunteer 132 hours a year
- Adults 18-29 volunteer 145 hours a year
- Those under the age of 18 volunteer 155 hours a year

Older Volunteers Volunteer More

Average Hours of Volunteering Per Year by Age Group
Among All Users



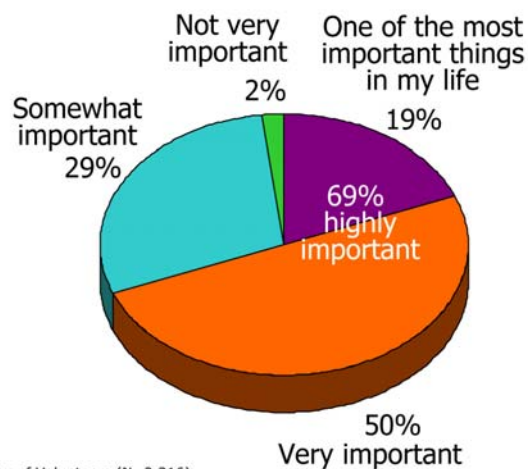
Source: Hart Survey of Volunteers (N=2,316)

Volunteering is about identity

Users of all ages show a remarkable commitment to volunteering. When compared to other things in their life, 69% find their volunteer work highly important.

Volunteering Is About Identity

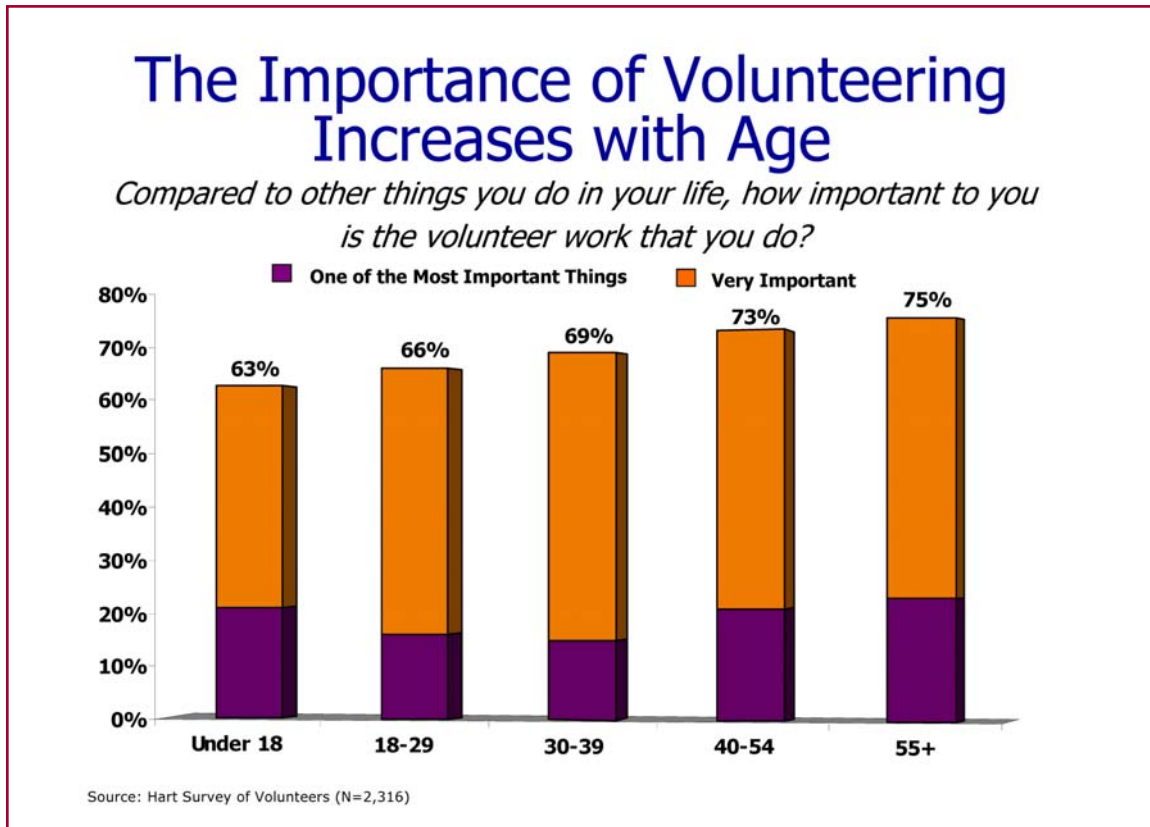
Compared to other things you do in your life, how important to you is the volunteer work that you do?



Source: Hart Survey of Volunteers (N=2,316)

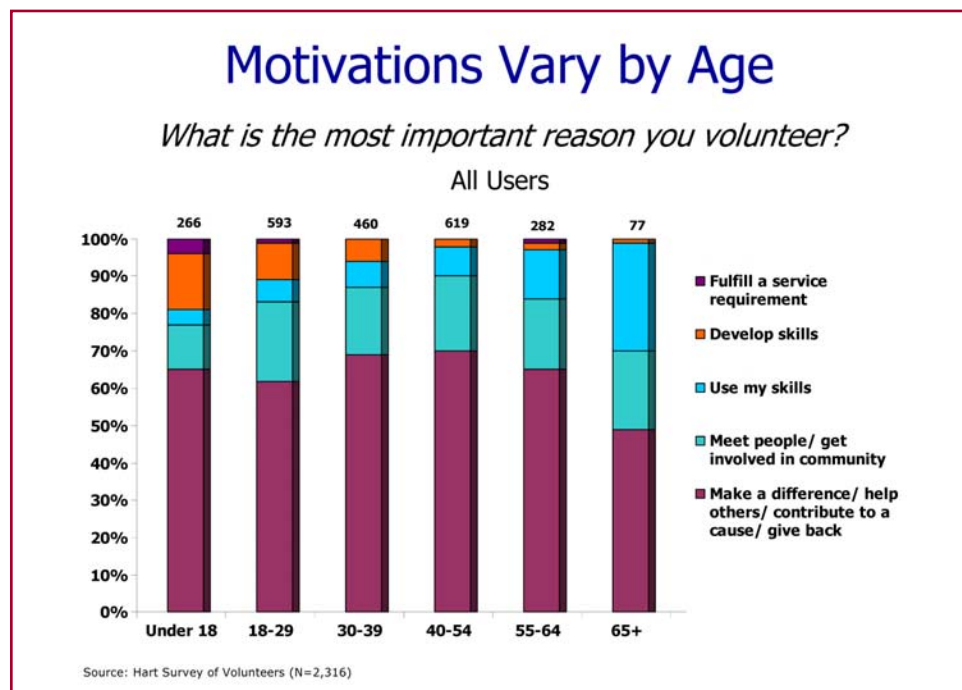
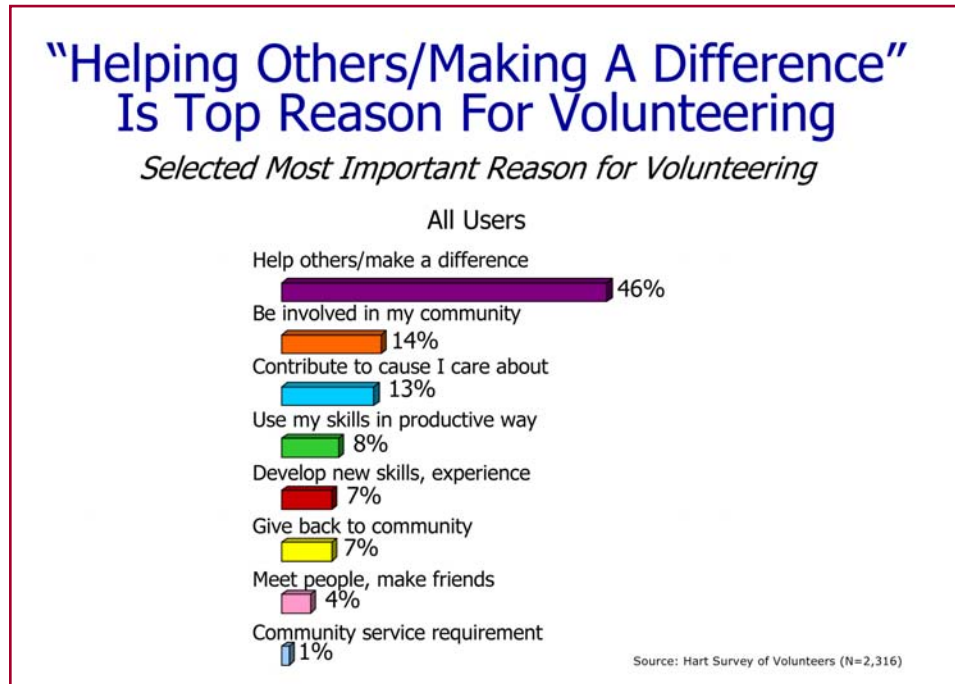
The importance of volunteering increases with age

Older adults are more likely to appreciate the personal significance of volunteering. Two-thirds (65%) of volunteers under age 30 rate volunteering as “highly important.” This proportion grows gradually, with three-quarters of volunteers age 65 and over rating volunteering as either one of the most important or a very important aspect of their lives.



The desire to help others/make a difference is essential, but motivations vary by age

As the chart illustrates, "To help others and feel like I've made a difference" is the primary motivation for volunteering across all age groups. However, motivations do vary by age.

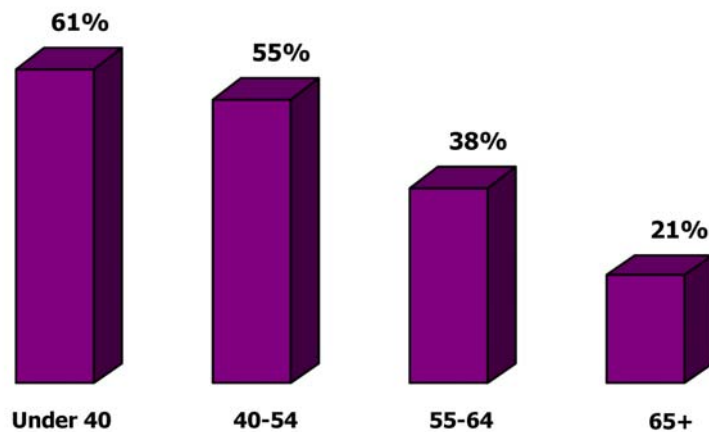


Older users are considerably less likely than younger users to find an opportunity of interest

Users 65+ are three times less likely to find an opportunity that interests them than those 40 and under. The research suggests that much of this decline is related to the nature of the activity associated with the volunteer opportunity. While people of all ages share a common motivation to volunteer, the findings that follow illustrate that older volunteers have higher expectations for their volunteer experiences than their younger counterparts.

Older Volunteers Find Fewer Opportunities of Interest

% saying they find a volunteer opportunity that matches their interests at least half the time they visit VolunteerMatch

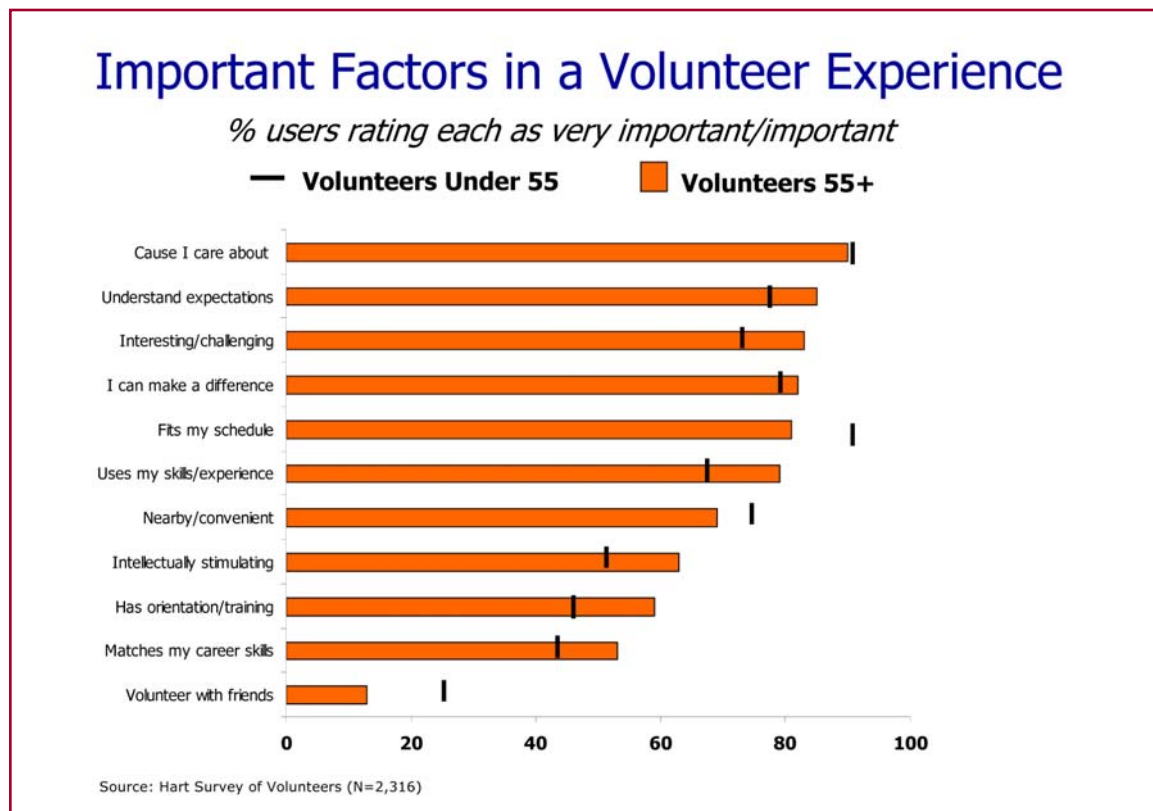


Source: Hart Survey of Volunteers (N=2,316)

Important factors in a volunteer experience

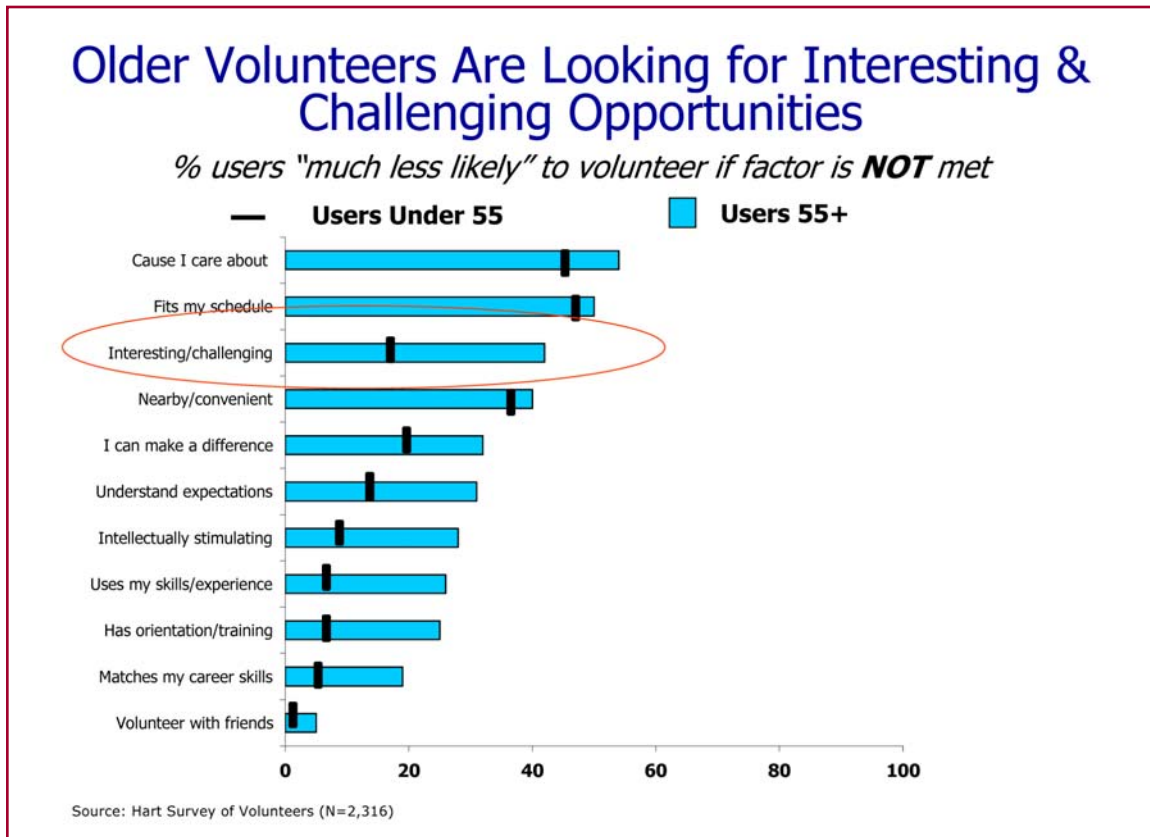
Older and younger volunteers have a similar view of factors that contribute to a positive volunteer experience. Older adults, however, place a higher premium on several factors related to the volunteer assignment itself, rather than the underlying cause or mission. Those 55+ are noticeably more likely than those under 55 to find the following to be an important part of a positive volunteer experience:

- Understand expectations
- Interesting/challenging work
- Uses my skills/experiences
- Intellectually stimulating
- Has orientation/training
- Matches my career skills



Older volunteers are looking for interesting and challenging opportunities

Older volunteers are understandably reluctant to waste their time and are "much less likely" to volunteer than those under 55 if an opportunity fails to live up to their expectations. For example, volunteers 55+ are more than twice as likely, compared to those under 55, to pass on an opportunity they didn't find interesting and challenging.

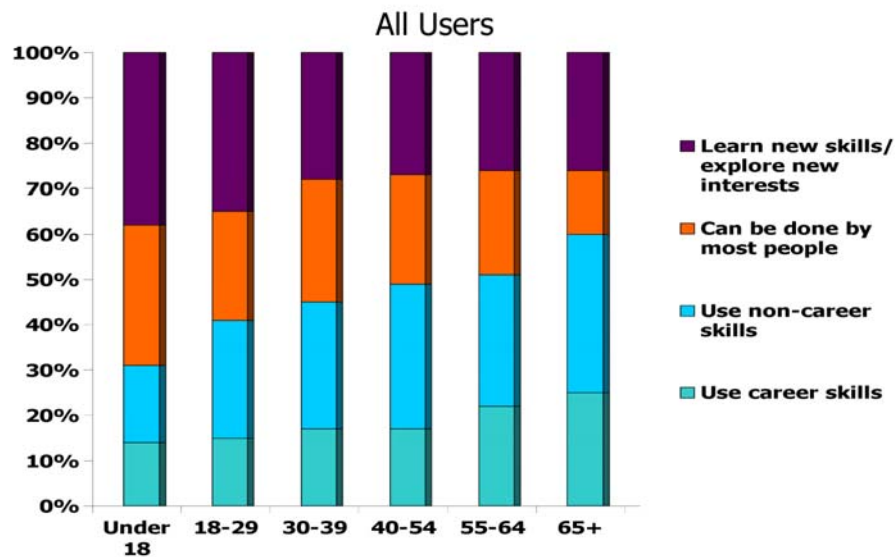


Older volunteers would prefer to make use of their skills

Older volunteers are more interested in making use of their existing skills and interests than younger volunteers who tend, not surprisingly, to be more interested in learning new skills and exploring new interests. Over half (53%) of all volunteers age 55 and over would prefer a volunteer activity that makes use of either a "career" or "non-career" related skill or interest. It is interesting to note that 55+ non-volunteers tend to have a greater interest in learning new skills and exploring new interests than existing volunteers.

Older Volunteers Would Prefer to Make Use of Their Skills

... which of the following statements best describes the kind of activity you prefer?



Source: Hart Survey of Volunteers (N=2,316)

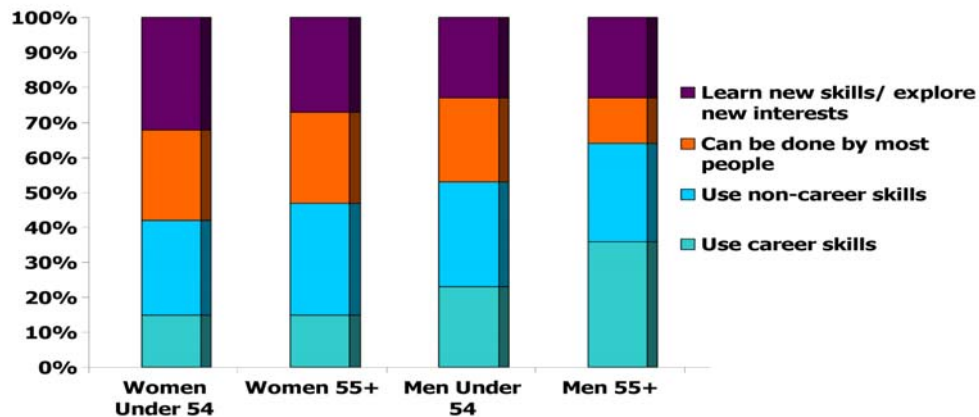
Men are particularly interested in making use of their skills

Nearly two-thirds of men 55+ indicate that they would prefer a volunteer opportunity that makes use of their personal or professional skills.

Men are Particularly Interested in Making Use of Their Skills

...which of the following statements best describes the kind of activity you prefer?

Users by Gender and Age



Source: Hart Survey of Volunteers (N=2,316)

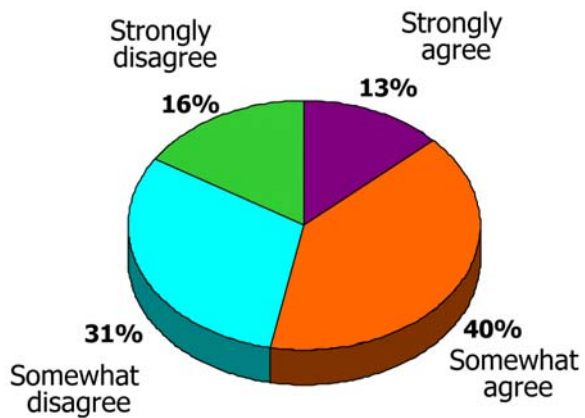
Skills are a sticking point for older men

Slightly more than half (53%) of male volunteers age 55+ agree with the statement, "I can always find volunteer opportunities on VolunteerMatch that match my personal and professional skills and abilities," compared with 72% of volunteers overall.

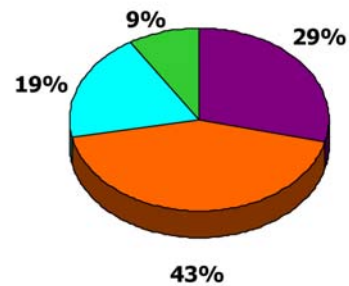
Skills Are A Sticking Point for Older Men

"I can always find volunteer opportunities that match my personal and professional skills and abilities."

Men Age 55+



All Users



Source: Hart Survey of Volunteers (N=2,316)

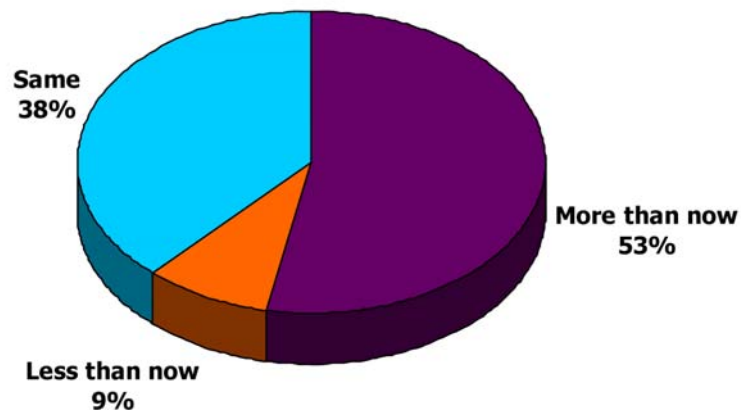
More than half of those 55+ expect to volunteer more in the next few years

Despite the fact that older users are less likely to find the opportunities they are looking for, they are still expecting to volunteer more in the years ahead. Fifty-three percent of users 55+ expect that over the next few years they will be volunteering more than they are now. Only 9% report that they expect to be volunteering less than they are now.

Most Volunteers 55+ Expect to Volunteer More

Thinking ahead to the next few years, do you think you will be volunteering...

Among Users 55+



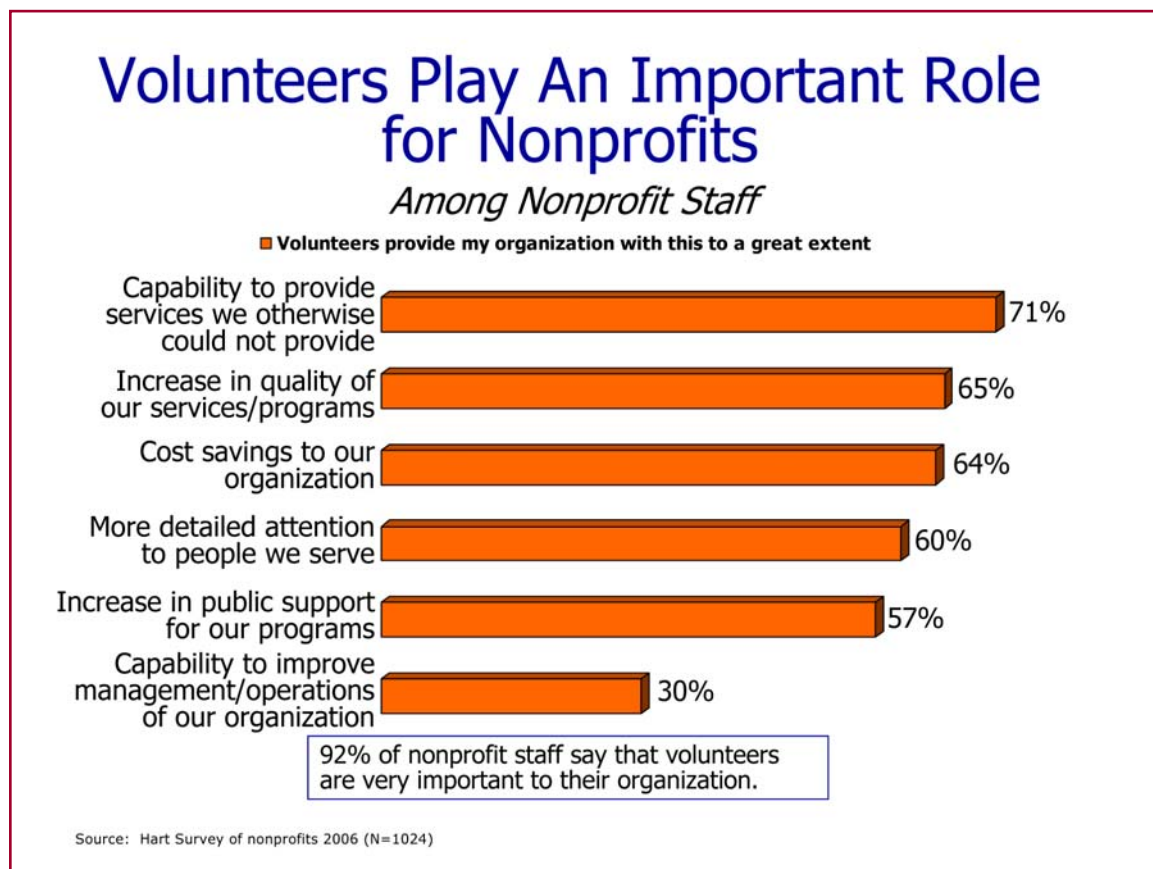
Source: Hart Survey of Volunteers (N=2,316)

3. The Nonprofit Perspective *(User research - nonprofits)*

Volunteers play an important role for nonprofits

Nonprofits see volunteers as critical, with 92% of nonprofit staff members saying that volunteers are very important to their organization, providing substantial support and improving their organizations' capabilities in a number of key areas:

- 71% or seven in 10 nonprofits say that to a great extent, volunteers provide them with a capability to provide services or levels of service they otherwise could not provide
- 65% say volunteers significantly increase the quality of services and programs
- 64% say volunteers provide cost savings to their organizations
- 60% say volunteers enable them to offer more detailed attention to the people they serve
- 57% say volunteers help increase public support for the organization's programs



The more volunteers at a nonprofit, the higher the value placed on volunteers

The more volunteers an organization uses, the more likely staff members are to recognize the value of their volunteer program.

- 73% of nonprofits that use more than 100 volunteers say volunteers enable them to provide services they would otherwise not be able to, compared to 64% of nonprofits that use 25 or fewer volunteers
- 71% of nonprofits that use more than 100 volunteers say volunteers enable them to save money, compared to 56% of nonprofits that use 25 or fewer volunteers
- 67% of nonprofits that use more than 100 volunteers say volunteers improve the quality of their programs or services, compared to 62% of nonprofits that use 25 or fewer volunteers

The More Volunteers, The More Important Their Role Is Seen

For each benefit, % of nonprofit staff saying volunteers provide this to their organization to a great extent

	Number of volunteers organization has		
	Over 100	26 to 100	25/fewer
Capability to provide services we otherwise could not provide	73%	75%	64%
Cost savings to our organization	71%	64%	56%
Increase in quality of our services/programs	67%	65%	62%
More detailed attention to people we serve	64%	62%	54%
Increase in public support for our programs	63%	58%	49%

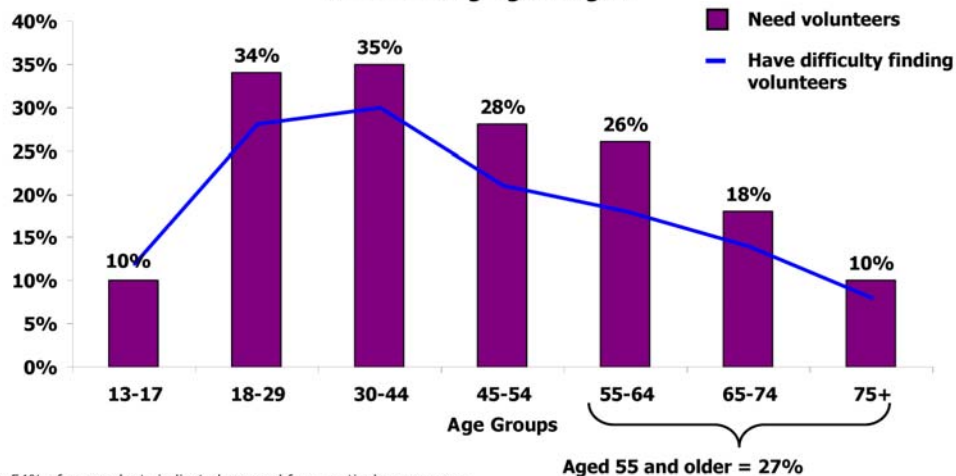
Source: Hart Survey of nonprofits 2006 (N=1024)

Nonprofit are looking for volunteers across all age groups

While most nonprofits (54%) don't have a particular need for volunteers of a certain age, many nonprofits do. Nonprofits report both their need for volunteers and their difficulty finding them, across all age groups.

Nonprofits Are Looking for Volunteers Across All Age Groups

Does your organization have a particular need for volunteers in any of the following age ranges? Do you have difficulty recruiting volunteers in any of the following age ranges?



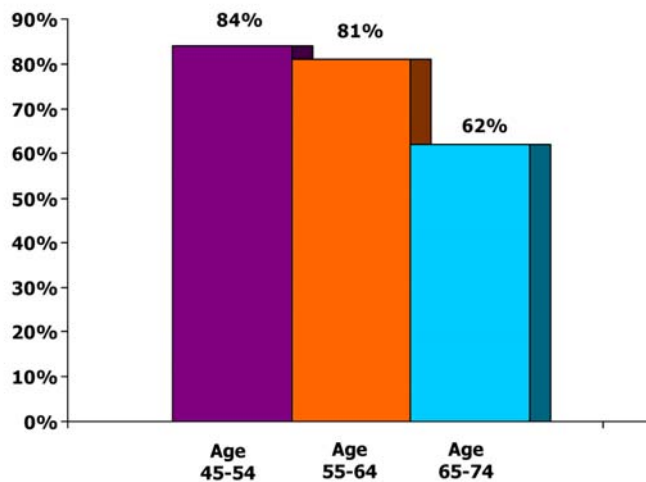
Note: 54% of respondents indicated no need for a particular age range
Source: Hart Survey of nonprofits 2006 (N=1024)

Most nonprofits are already engaging older volunteers

81% of nonprofits report that they are already working with volunteers between the ages of 55-64; and 62% are working with volunteers between the ages of 65 – 74.

Most Nonprofits Are Already Engaging Older Volunteers

Please indicate whether any of your organization's volunteers fall into the following age ranges.



Source: Hart Survey of nonprofits 2006 (N=1024)

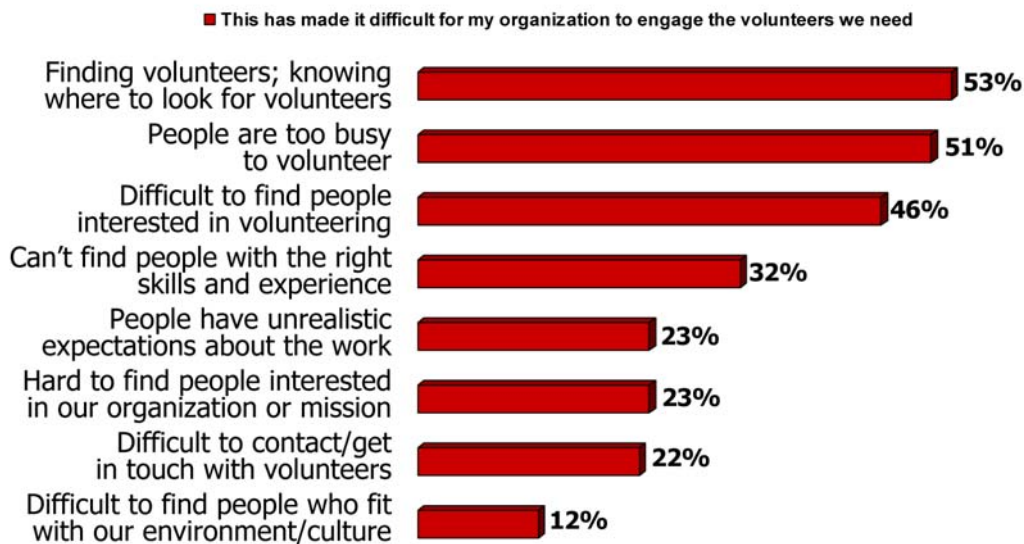
Top challenges to engaging volunteers

Despite historically high levels of volunteering, slightly more than half, or 53% of nonprofits, say the biggest challenge in engaging the volunteers they need is finding them/known where to look for them. Among the other barriers cited:

- 51% say people are too busy to volunteer
- 46% say it is difficult to find people interested in volunteering
- 32% say they can't find people with the right skills or experience

Top Challenges In Engaging Volunteers

Among Nonprofit Staff



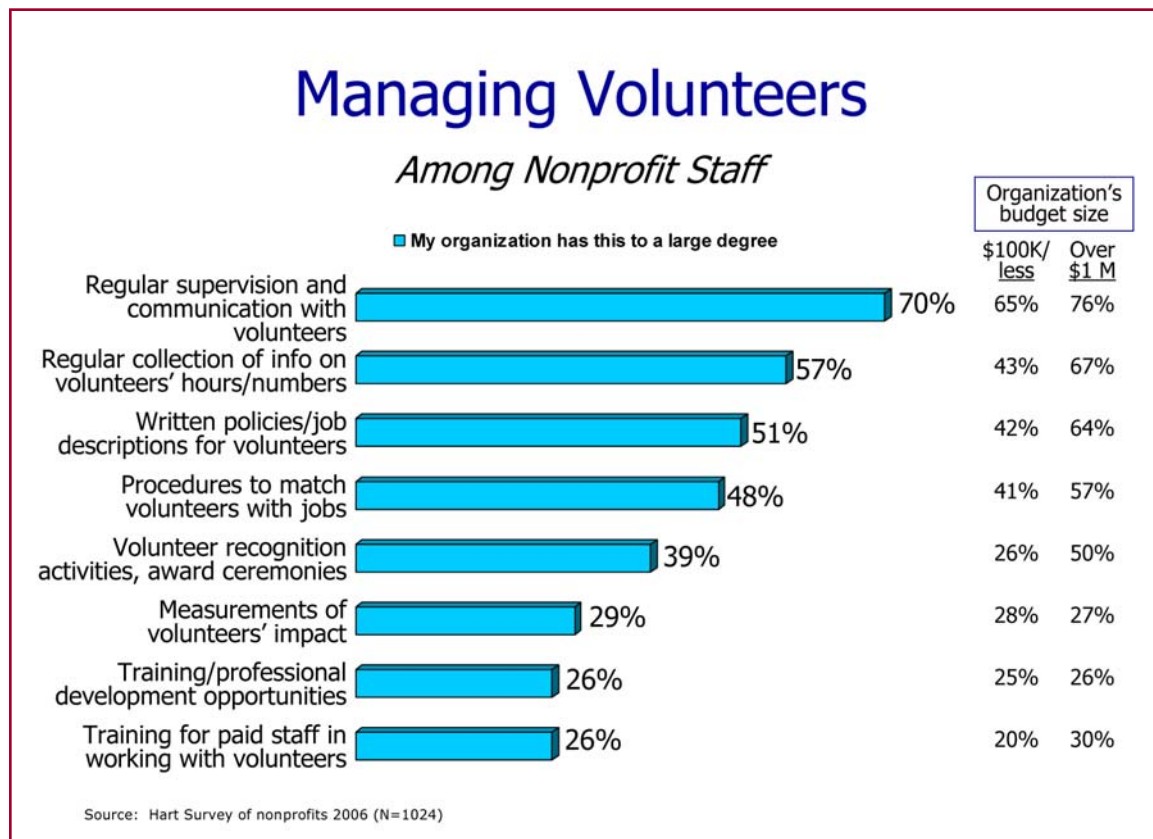
Source: Hart Survey of nonprofits 2006 (N=1024)

Managing volunteers

Seventy percent of nonprofits surveyed report taking a very active role in supervising and communicating with volunteers. However, when it comes to more comprehensive management of volunteers, the percentages dip.

- 57% of nonprofits report regular collection of hours
- 51% report developing written volunteer policies
- 48% report targeting recruitment efforts to match volunteers with opportunities
- 29% measure their volunteers' impact
- 26% of nonprofits report training paid staff to work with volunteers

Consistent with research from CNCS and the Urban Institute, VolunteerMatch found that larger nonprofits with more volunteers are more likely than smaller organizations to invest in the management of their programs.



How older volunteers are different

When initially asked, nonprofits said that they see little difference in the abilities of older and younger volunteers. But when probed further during the one-on-one interviews, nonprofits acknowledge that younger and older volunteers do differ in ways that can affect their performance. These staff members cast older volunteers' distinct characteristics overwhelmingly in positive terms, calling them more reliable, available, mature, self-confident, committed, and better with people than their younger counterparts.

When pressed, nonprofits reveal some negative perceptions that older adults can be somewhat more set in their ways, less flexible regarding assignments, and more interested in socializing and/or chatting.

Commenting on Older Volunteers

"Well, they usually have more time. That's the biggest thing... I think they've dealt with a lot of different people and a lot of different situations, so I don't think they're as easily shaken up by things in general. Now on the negative side, some of them have a tendency to be set in their ways."

"They have the maturity level and probably the commitment level and the responsibility level that would be perfect. I would like to tap into that market. . . . They've certainly got more time on their hands than the working mother who's frantic trying to take care of a houseful of kids and the household duties and everything else."

"It's not so much skills that the older volunteers have. I think they have more of a sense of commitment: once they've started something, they really do see it through."

Source: Hart Survey of nonprofits 2006 (N=1024)

Older Volunteers are Different

When pressed, nonprofit staff cite a number of ways that older volunteers are different:

Opportunities

- ✓ More reliable and mature
- ✓ Greater pride in their work
- ✓ More flexible schedules
- ✓ Better with people

Challenges

- ▶ Established behavior
- ▶ Opinionated
- ▶ Physical limitations

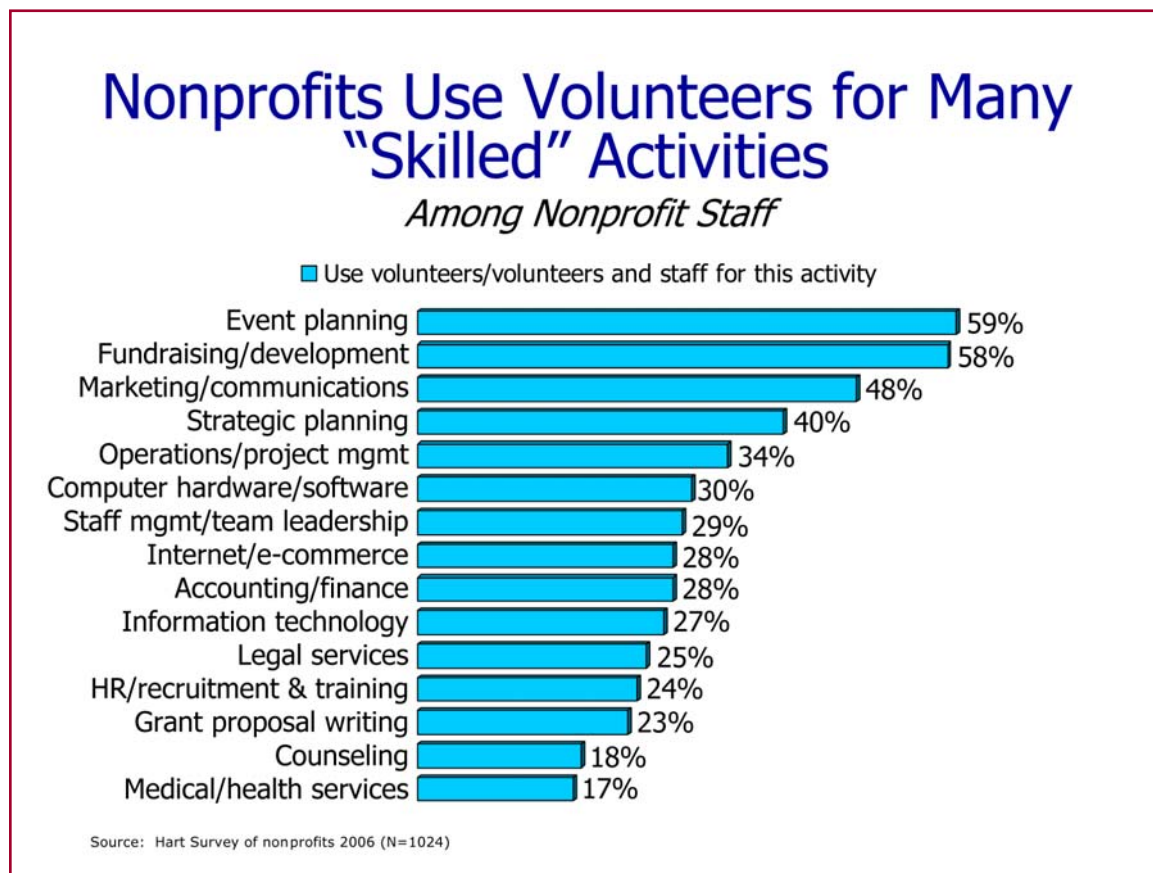
Source: Hart Survey of nonprofits 2006 (N=1024)

4. Tapping the Skills of Older Adults *(User research – volunteers & nonprofits)*

Nonprofits use volunteers for many “skilled” activities

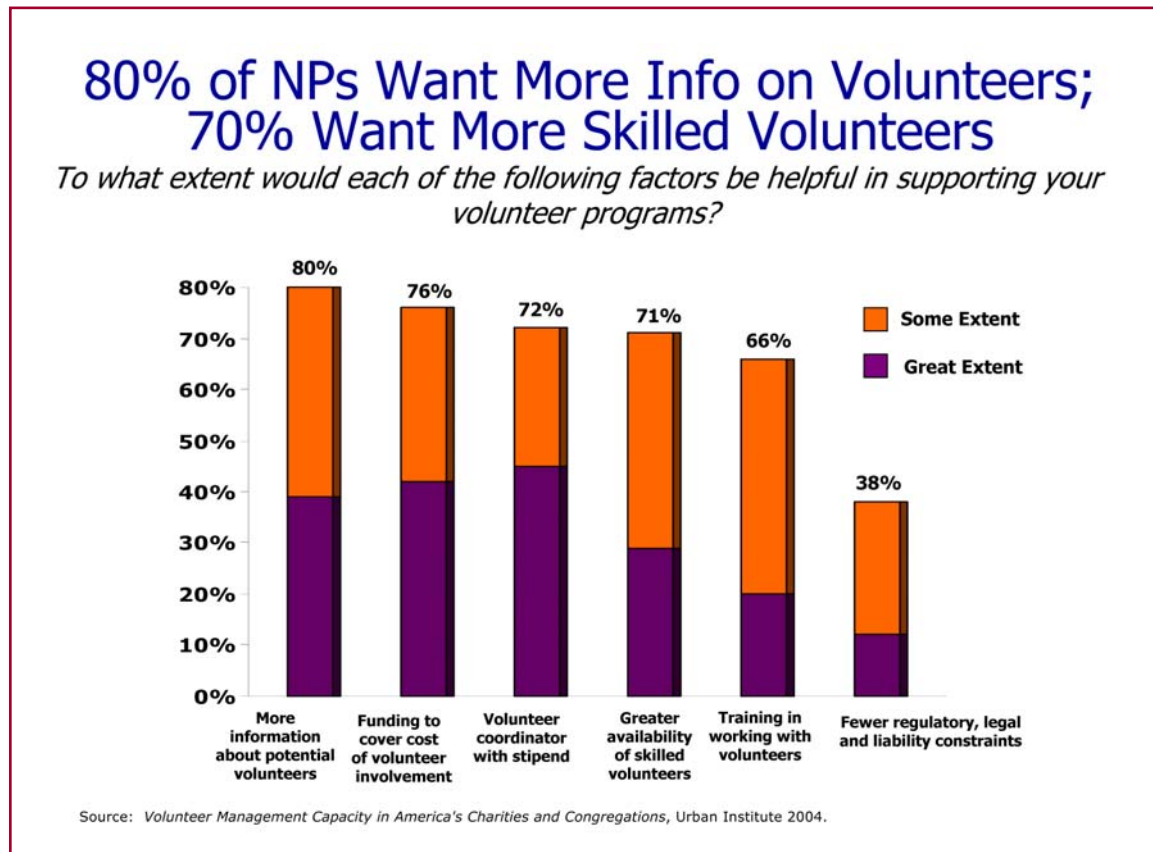
Many organizations use volunteers to fill (or assist staff with) a host of skilled activities. The skilled functions most likely to be supported by volunteers include:

- 59% for event planning
- 58% for fundraising and development
- 48% for marketing and communications
- 40% for strategic planning
- 34% for operations and project management



Nonprofits appreciate the potential value of skilled volunteers

The Urban Institute's 2004 study, *Volunteer Management Capacity in America's Charities and Congregations: A Briefing Report*, underscores the extent to which nonprofits recognize the desirability of a larger pool of skilled volunteers. Over 70% of nonprofits surveyed agreed that the increased availability of skilled volunteers would be helpful to their volunteer program. In general and beyond skills capability, the vast majority of nonprofits reported wanting more information about potential volunteers.

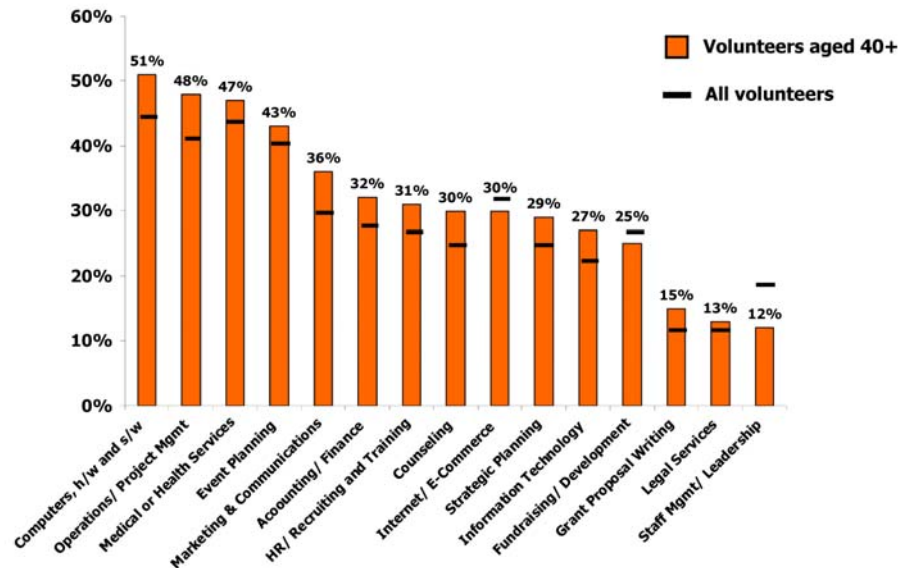


Older adults are more likely to have a variety of skills

Not surprisingly, given the additional experience they have in the job market, adults age 40+ were more skilled relative to younger volunteers. These skills include many functions that could prove useful to well-organized nonprofits.

Not Surprisingly Older Adults Are More Likely to Have a Variety of Professional Skills

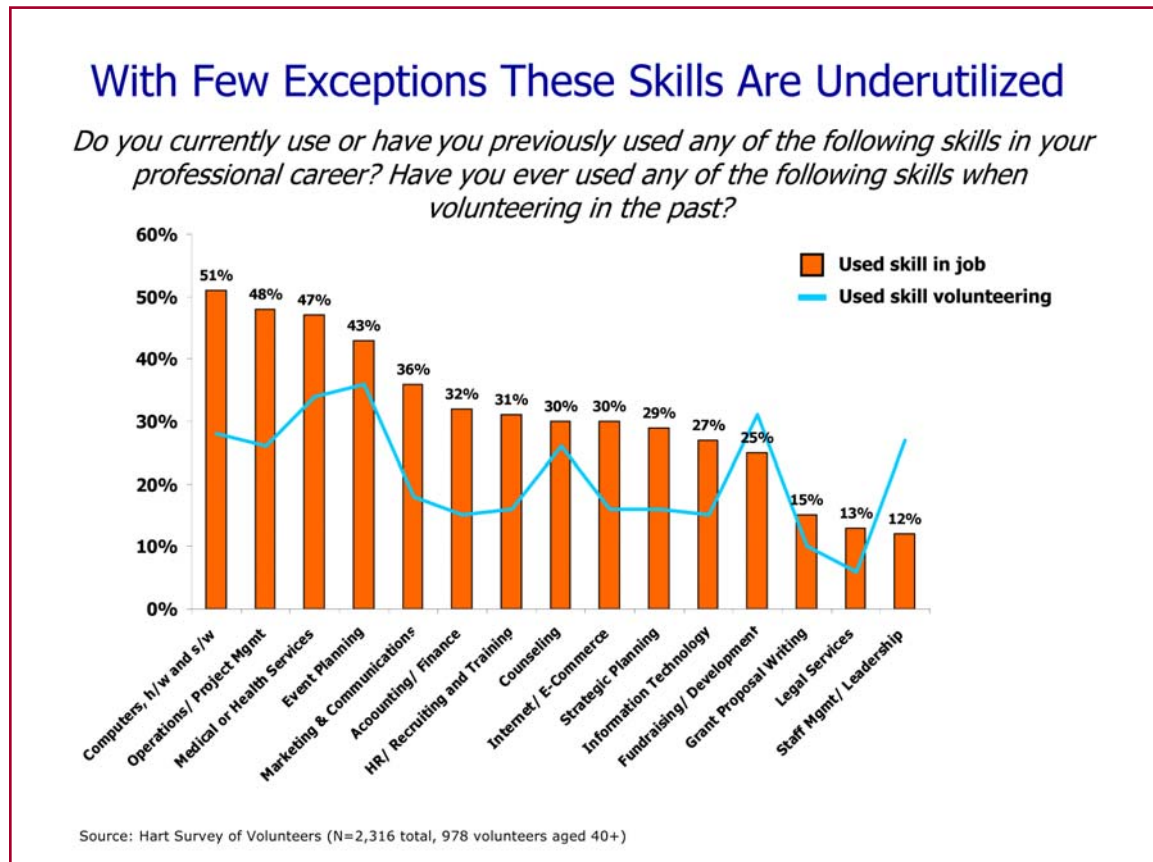
Do you currently use or have you previously used any of the following skills in your professional career?



Source: Hart Survey of Volunteers (N=2,316 total, 978 volunteers aged 40+)

With few exceptions, these skills are underutilized

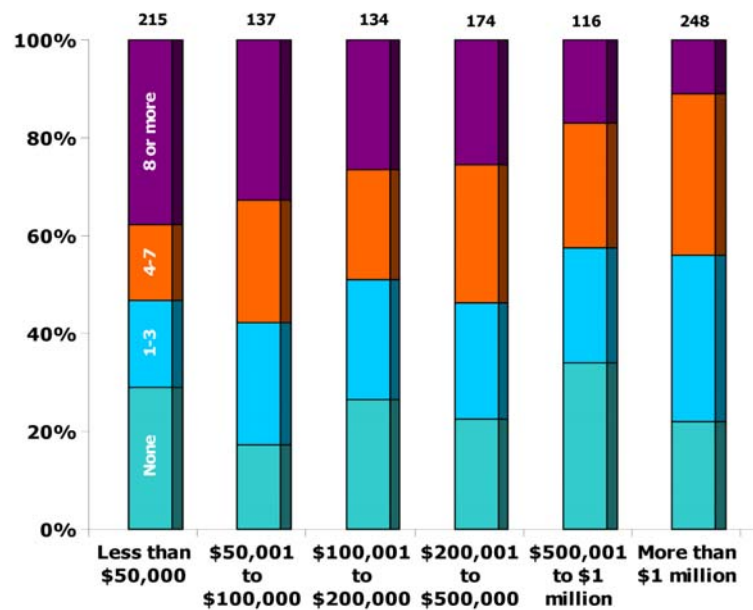
Our survey of volunteers found that, across the board, nonprofits are not fully leveraging the professional skills of their volunteers, including their experience with marketing and communications, event planning, and accounting and finance. A few exceptions to this underutilization of skills are in the areas of fundraising and staff management/leadership, a likely consequence of nonprofit board involvement.



Small nonprofits tend to use greater variety of skilled volunteers

Nonprofits with smaller operating budgets and fewer staff members tend to rely more heavily on volunteers with a variety of skills.

Smaller NPs Tend to Make Use of a Greater Variety of Volunteer Skills
Number of different volunteer skills used by organization budget



Source: Hart Survey of nonprofits 2006 (N=1024)

5. Use of Internet *(User research – volunteer & nonprofits)*

Leveraging the power of the Internet

According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 78% of 41-50 year-olds and 72% of 51-59 year-olds go online. In addition, marketing research firm Jupiter Research reports that there are currently 11.5 million adults 65 or older who regularly access the Internet – a number that is expected to double by 2010 as Internet-savvy Boomers reach retirement age.

As the majority of Boomers go online in increasing numbers, and approach retirement with an interest in volunteer service, these two parallel trends present a new opportunity for the nonprofit sector.

Leveraging the Power of the Internet

The Pew Internet & American Life Project reports the growing use of the Internet among older adults

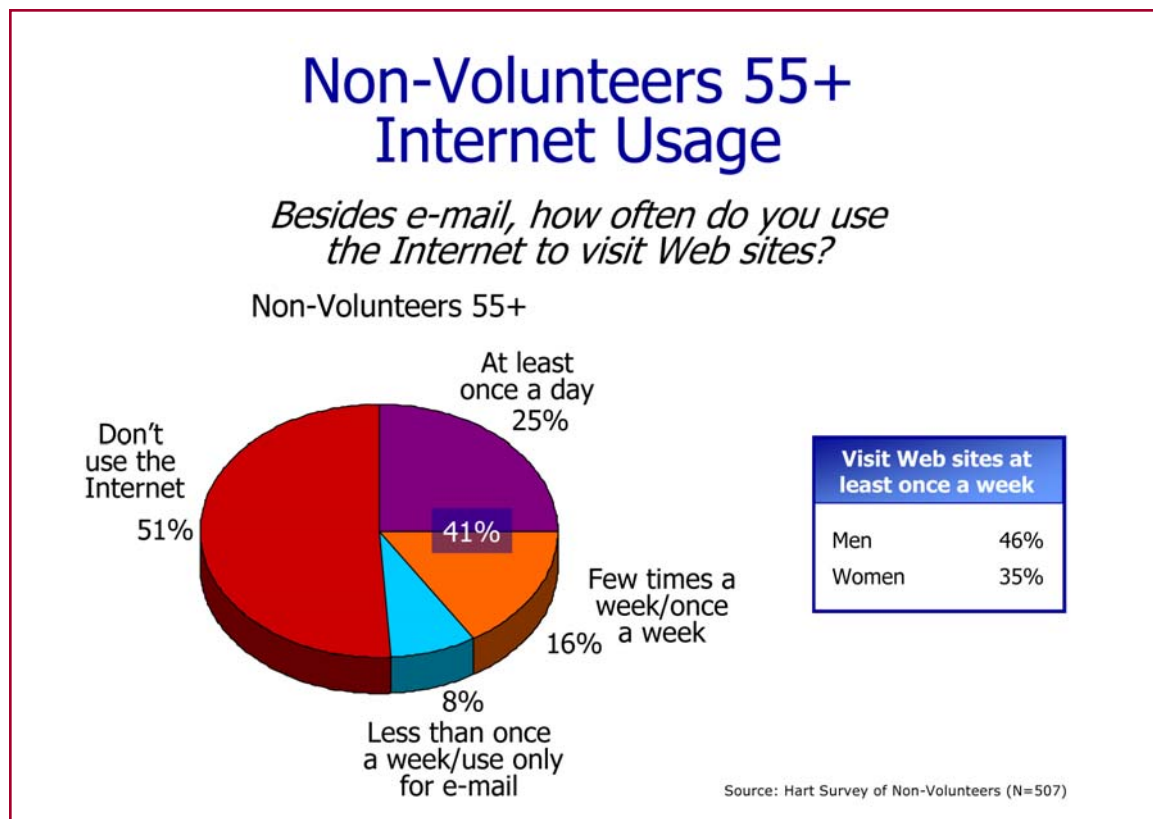
- **78%** of 41-50 year-olds are online
- **72%** of 51-59 year-olds are online

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project

Internet usage among 55+ non-volunteers

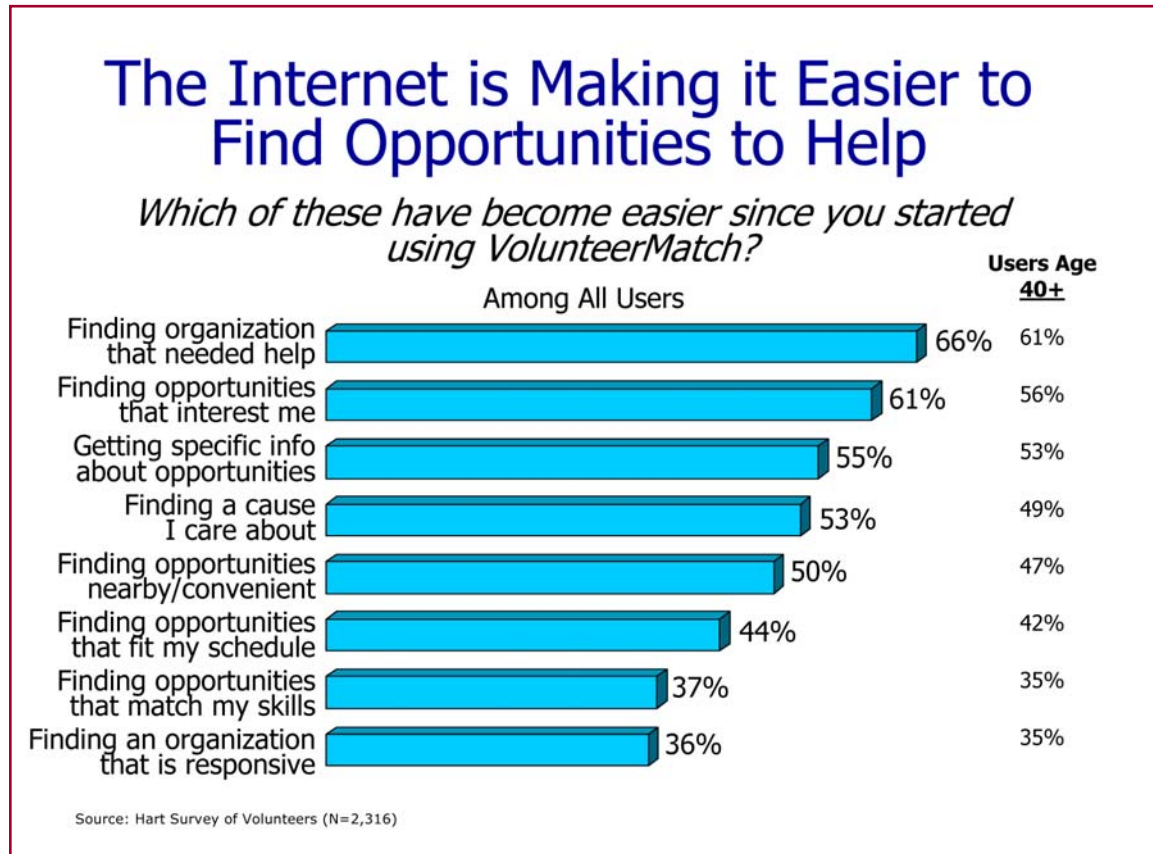
Of the 55- to 75-year-old non-volunteers surveyed:

- About half are online in some capacity
- About 41% use the Internet to visit Web sites at least once a week
- Men (46%) are more likely than women (35%) to use the Internet to visit Web sites at least once a week



The Internet is making it easier to find opportunities to help

VolunteerMatch users of all ages report that their use of the Internet is making it easier for them to find volunteer opportunities. Users report that they have found it easier to find an organization that needed help (66%), find an opportunity of interest (61%), and get specific information on volunteer opportunities (55%).



From online to offline

The majority of users report successfully volunteering with an organization they found on the service. Specifically, 61% of those users 40+ report successfully volunteering with an organization they found on the service; another 29% report that they haven't yet but expect to within the next 12 months.



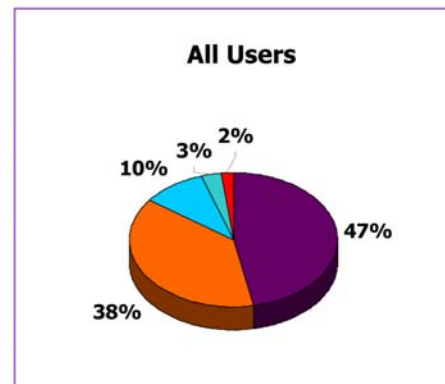
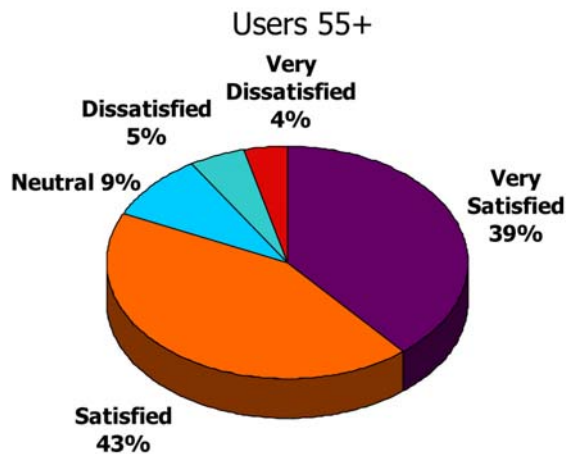
Encouraging a cycle of satisfaction

While the research indicates that older users are less likely to find an opportunity of interest, when they do find an opportunity they are reporting high levels of satisfaction with their experience.

A full 82% of recent volunteers 55+ report satisfaction with their volunteer experience, a figure that compares favorably with the satisfaction among all users.

Encouraging a Cycle of Satisfaction

How satisfied have you been with your experiences volunteering with organizations you found through VolunteerMatch?

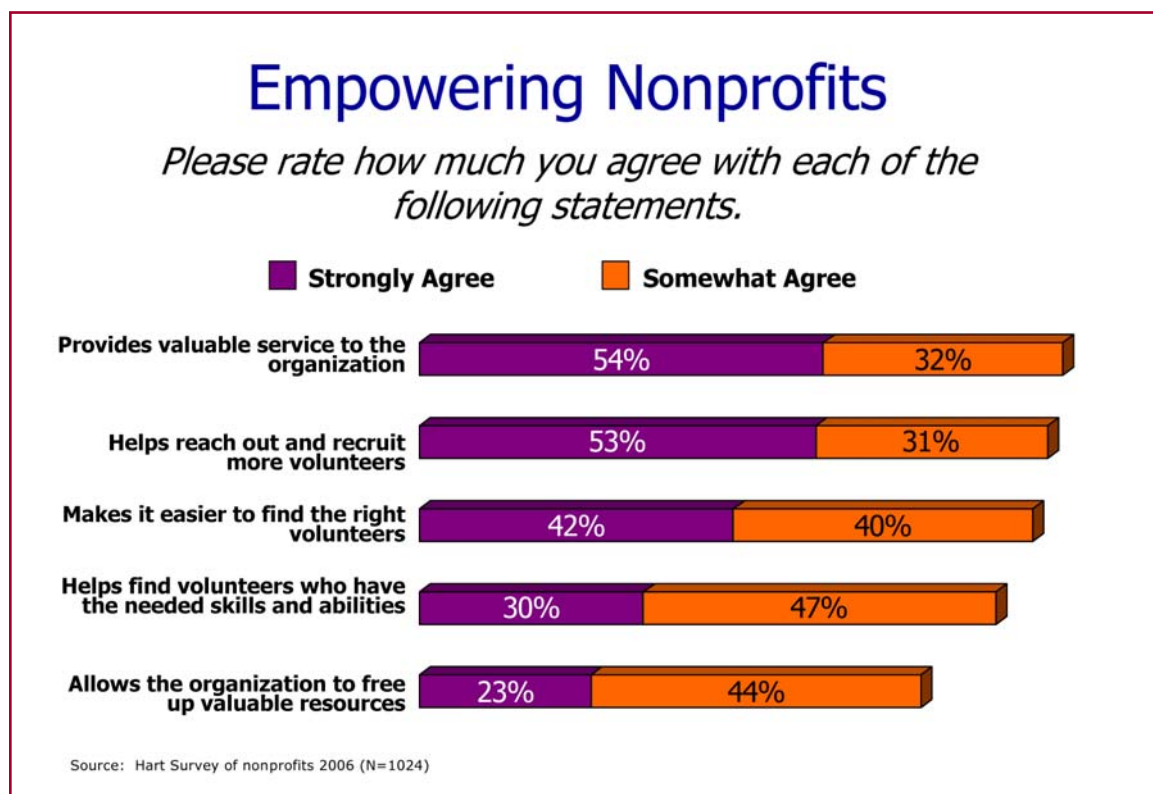


Source: Hart Survey of Volunteers (N=2,316)

Empowering nonprofits

The Internet is a powerful tool for nonprofits to expand their volunteer recruiting capacity. Among nonprofit users:

- 84% say it makes it easier for them to reach out and recruit more volunteers
- 82% say it makes it easier to find the right volunteers
- 77% say it helps them find volunteers with the skills and abilities they need
- 65% say it helps free up valuable resources



Recruiting skilled volunteers

Nonprofits users are overwhelmingly satisfied that their use of the service has helped them to find highly skilled and/or experienced volunteers.



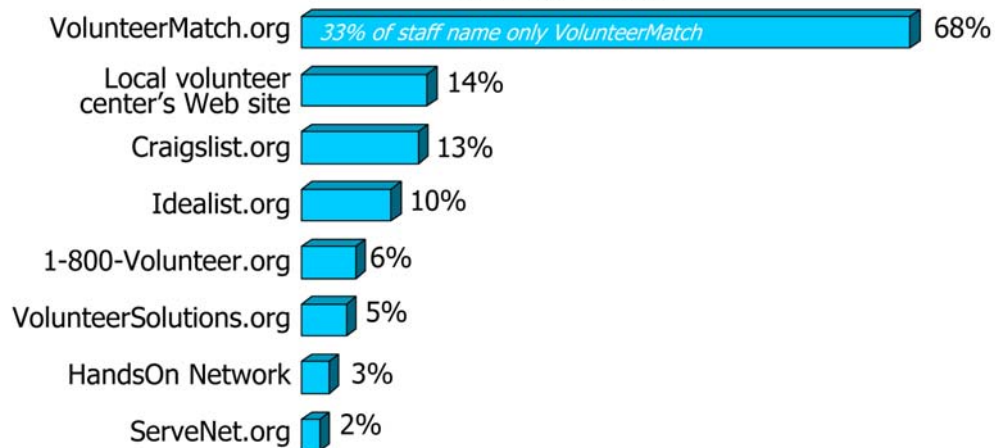
Connecting to make a difference

Nonprofits are increasingly making use of the Internet and a new generation of services to complement and expand their volunteer recruiting activities.

Connecting to Make a Difference

Which two or three of these Internet recruiting services have you found most useful?

All nonprofit staff



Source: Hart Survey of nonprofits 2006 (N=1024)

V. Observations

- The aging baby boom generation represents a deep reservoir of talent and experience for the nonprofit sector. Not only are a sizable number of older adults already engaged in volunteering, but more than half of adults age 55+, who don't currently volunteer, have an interest in volunteering either now or in the future.
- Nonprofits recognize that older volunteers bring considerable assets to their organization, including more time commitment than younger volunteers as well as more experience, skills, maturity, and people skills. Compared to their younger peers, older volunteers are more interested in leveraging their skills and place a higher premium on volunteer opportunities that are interesting and challenging.
- Among the barriers to tapping into this potential wellspring of volunteerism is the difficulty that older would-be volunteers and nonprofits have in finding each other. Positive experiences of older volunteers who found their volunteer opportunities online – and nonprofits that use the Web to recruit volunteers – suggest that the Internet can be a powerful tool for helping more older adults find a great place to volunteer.
- Volunteers' satisfaction with their volunteer experience, facilitated by their ability to find a volunteer opportunity with the "right fit," has a direct impact on a nonprofit's ability to both retain and manage its volunteer staff. Our research shows that volunteers who find their opportunities online are able to self-select for criteria that matter to them, such as time, issue, and activity. As a result, they are more likely to be in sync with the organization they choose to serve. This encourages a cycle of satisfaction that we expect stimulates higher levels of civic engagement among volunteers of all ages.





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